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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 8 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement dated 7 August 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the ninth anniversary of the war of August 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 8 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 9th anniversary of the August 2008 War

7.08.2017 Tbilisi — 7 August 2017 marks the 9th anniversary of Russia's large-scale military invasion in Georgia and illegal occupation of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions.

After nine years of the August 2008 war, Russia still violates the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement and continues its policy of occupation and factual annexation with regard to inseparable regions of the sovereign state in complete disregard for fundamental principles of international law. This envisages the illegal integration of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia into Russia's military, political, economic and social system; military build-up in the occupied regions, as well as fortification of the occupation line by razor and barbed wire fences and different artificial barriers. At the same time, illegal detentions and kidnappings of people along the occupation line, restriction of freedom of movement and access by residents of the adjacent territories to their farmlands and houses regularly take place. This situation has been even more aggravated by closure of four so-called crossing points in Abkhazia region. Ethnic discrimination towards Georgians living in the occupied territories and violation of their fundamental rights continue. While hundreds of thousands of persons are expelled from their homes, the Russian occupation regime treats the remaining Georgian population in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions as foreigners in their houses. Following the restriction of Georgian language in Gali district schools, from the next academic year education in native language will be prohibited in Georgian schools of Tskhinvali region as well. Against this background, the Russian occupation regime tries to further isolate the people living in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and intentionally hinders their humanitarian contacts with the rest of Georgia and the world.

Despite Russia's provocative actions, the Government of Georgia continues its unwavering peace policy and strives for peaceful conflict resolution through diplomatic means, negotiations and dialogue. In contrast to the Russian Federation, Georgia stays in firm compliance with the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement and through constructive engagement tries to achieve the tangible result in the Geneva International Discussions. Furthermore, against the backdrop of permanent use of force by the Russian Federation in the occupied territories, Georgia has many times confirmed its legally binding commitment on non-use of force, *inter alia*, on executive and legislative levels. Besides, the Government of Georgia resists barbwire fences and artificial barriers erected along the occupation line with intensified policy of building confidence and ties between the war-torn communities.

As a result of this rational and peaceful policy, despite above difficult challenges, the Government of Georgia managed to turn the democratic and economic development of the country into irreversible process, achieved peace and stability in its controlled territory and made progress in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The Georgian side highly appreciates firm support of partner countries and international organizations towards sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, and their relevant decisions, which significantly contribute to the conflict resolution

according to the norms and principles of international law. After nine years of ongoing occupation, the Georgian side once again calls upon the international community to make consolidated efforts to address the consequences of the August 2008 war and resolve the Russia-Georgia conflict peacefully.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its deepest sympathy to the families and relatives of the soldiers and civil population who fell victim to the August 2008 war.